

REMARKS

In the present Amendment, the subject matter of original claim 3 has been incorporated into claim 1, so that the negative resist composition of claim 1 not only contains the alkali-soluble resin, the cross-linking agents and the acid generator, but also contains a nitrogen-containing basic compound. The nitrogen-containing basic compound is preferably present as described at page 58, third paragraph of the specification.

New claims 15 to 20 are supported by pages 58 – 59, page 61 last paragraph and page 11, lines 5 to 7 of the specification.

No new matter has been added, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-2 and 4-20 will be pending.

I. Response to Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-14 are again rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Tao. The Examiner submits that Tao describes a radiation sensitive patterning composition comprising at least one crosslinking agent, a polymer capable of reacting with the crosslinking agent and an acid generating compound, with a suggestion that the crosslinking agents of Tao can be used in a combination of two or more.

First of all, the Examiner is respectfully requested to recognize the significance of the environment in which the composition of the present invention is employed in contrast to the generalized lithographic applications of Tao. As described at pages 1-2 of the present application and as illustrated by the working examples of the present application, in which the compound (D) of the present invention is included, the negative resist composition of the present

invention is used for forming fine and superfine patterning for semiconductor use. On the other hand, Tao is not concerned with semiconductor resists, but merely the generalized lithographic art. Thus, there are no teachings or suggestions in Tao relating to the specific technical field of the present invention, and certainly Tao could not possibly lead the skilled artisan working in the fine patterning art of manufacturing semiconductor devices to the present invention. The superior results obtained with the present invention in the areas of sensitivity, resolution, pattern profile and line edge roughness (LER), etc., of the fine patterns are nowhere suggested by Tao.

Although it is believed that the present claims are allowable for the above reasons alone, at this time the subject matter of original claim 3 has been incorporated into claim 1, so that the nitrogen-containing basic compound is included within the claimed negative resist composition. Applicants advise that the nitrogen-containing basic compound is not used in the lithographic printing plates as described by Tao. Naturally, Applicants advise, Tao does not describe the inclusion of the nitrogen-containing basic compound (D) in the Tao compositions. Therefore, for this additional reason, all claims are clearly patentable over Tao.

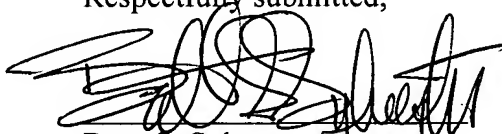
II. Conclusion

Allowance is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/642,291

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett S. Sylvester", written over a horizontal line.

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